



CURRENCY

Committee on Financial Services

Michael G. Oxley, Chairman

For Immediate Release:

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Giving Consumers Credit: How is the Credit Card Industry Treating Its Customers?

The House Financial Services Subcommittee on Financial Institutions, chaired by Rep. Spencer Bachus (AL), will hold a hearing to investigate the relationship between credit card issuers and their customers at 10 a.m. Nov. 1 in 2128 Rayburn.

“Recent FDIC reports indicate that consumer credit debt and available credit lines continue to grow at a staggering pace. As of June 2001, unused but available credit card lines exceeded \$3 trillion, nearly half of the United States gross domestic product. Total outstanding consumer credit card debt exceeds \$500 billion. With this growing debt and simultaneous growth in credit availability, many consumers face unprecedented financial difficulty in an increasingly volatile economy,” Chairman Bachus said.

The hearing will address the credit card industry’s balancing act of issuing credit to worthy customers without saturating the market with untenable debt.

“Credit cards are useful financial tools for both businesses and individuals,” Chairman Michael G. Oxley said. “But we have to be sure that overburdened consumers facing growing levels of debt in a slowing economy are treated fairly.”

Witness scheduled to testify are:

Panel I

- Dolores S. Smith, Director, Division of Consumer and Community Affairs, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System

- Elaine Kolish, Assistant Director, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Division of Enforcement, Federal Trade Commission

Panel II

- Frank Torres, Consumers Union
- Edward Mierzwinski, U.S. Public Interest Research Group
- Elizabeth DeMarse, CEO, Bankrate Inc.
- Robert Manning, Professor, Rochester Institute of Technology
- Joshua L. Peirez, Vice-President & Counsel, Mastercard International
- L. Richard Fischer, Attorney at Law, Morrison & Foerester, representing Visa International

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